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NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Distribution Record of *Tantilla alticola* Boulenger, 1903 (Squamata: Colubridae) in Coclé Province, Republic of Panama

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ABSTRACT: A single specimen of *Tantilla alticola* was collected from Parque Nacional G. D. Omar Torrijos Herrera of Coclé Province, Republic of Panama. This record fills in a gap in the distribution for this species within the cloud forests of Central America.

The genus *Tantilla* is among the most species-rich genera of New World snakes (~63 species; Uetz 2012), yet little is known about the natural history of this taxon. Member species are small, secretive, harmless colubrids (subfamily Colubrinae), which can be found under rocks, logs, and within leaf litter in forests, meadows, or coffee plantations (Köhler 2008). *Tantilla alticola* Boulenger, 1903 (Boulenger's Centipede Snake) is a rarely collected species (Savage 2002) with a non-contiguous distribution that is known to include the rain and cloud forests of north central Nicaragua, northern Costa Rica, near the border of Costa Rica and Panama, and also in northwestern Colombia (Köhler 2008; Figure 1). Here we report a new record of this species from central Panama.

While conducting an on-going herpetological monitoring survey of Parque Nacional G. D. Omar Torrijos

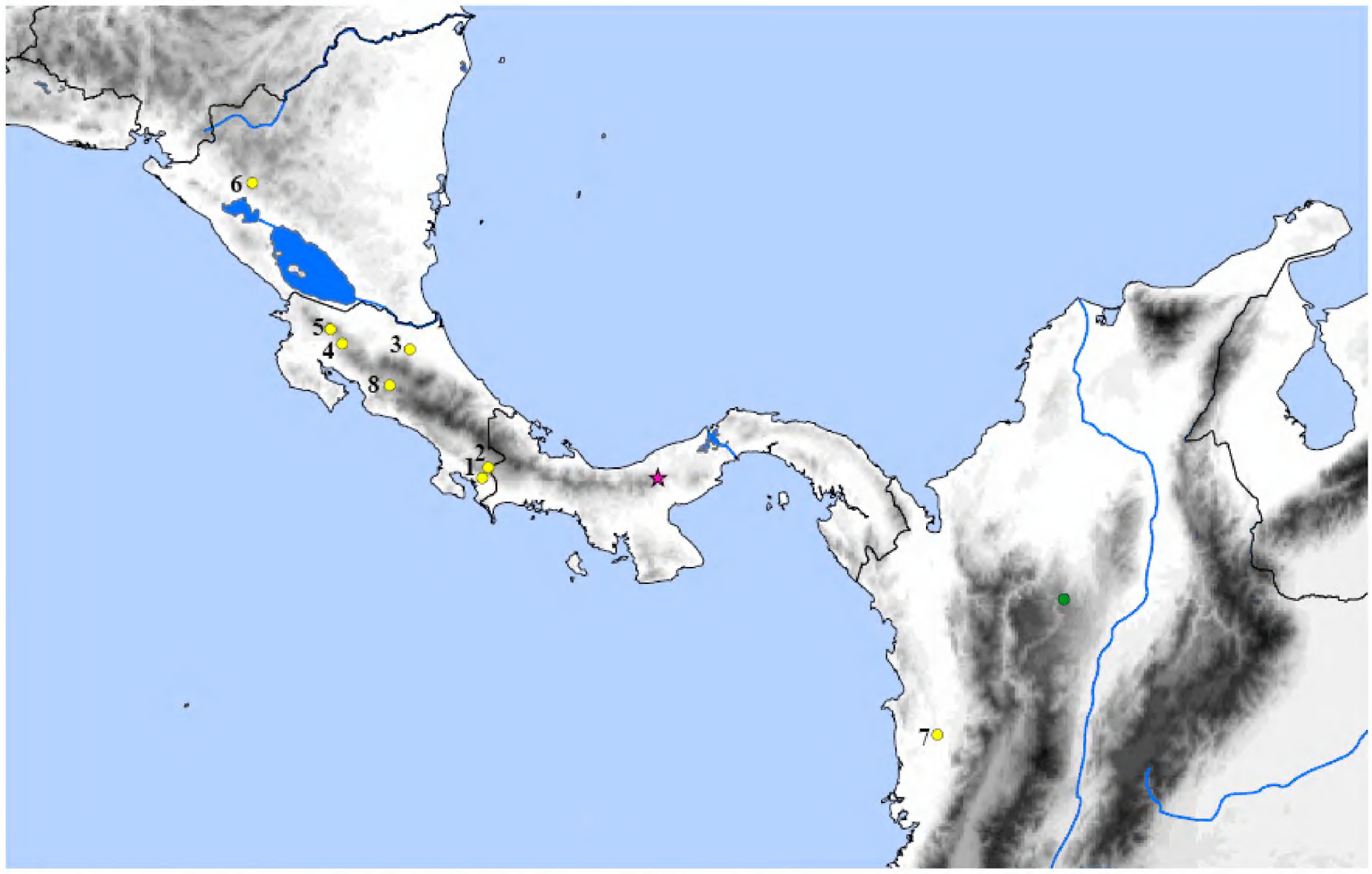

FIGURE 1. Geographic distribution of *Tantilla alticola*. The star indicates the individual collected within Parque Nacional G. D. Omar Torrijos Herrera of Coclé Province, green dot indicates the type specimen of *T. alticola* (Antioquia, Colombia), yellow dots represent previously collected specimens: 1. Costa Rica, estimated from Wilson 1986; 2. LACM 125561, Puntarenas, Costa Rica; 3. LACM 147597, Heredia, Costa Rica; 4. LACM 147598, Guanacaste, Costa Rica; 5. Costa Rica, estimated from Wilson 1986; 6. Nicaragua, estimated from Wilson 1986; 7. Colombia, estimated from Wilson 1986; 8. KU 30995, Cartago, Costa Rica.

Herrera of Coclé Province, Republic of Panama (08°40' N, 80°37'17" W: Fig. 1) on 13 January, 2012 at 19:34 h a single male individual of *Tantilla alticola* was found crossing a trail transecting an old logging road (Myers *et al.* 2007). The individual had a snout-vent length of 25.6 cm, a truncated tail with a remaining length of 5.9 cm, and a total weight of 6.8 grams. The specimen was identified based on the following characteristics: 150 ventral scales, 43+ subcaudals, the absence of a loreal scale, and smooth dorsal scales. In life the individual had an orange-red venter that darkened towards the tail, an indistinct light mid-dorsal stripe, an indistinct light colored lateral stripe on the fourth scale row, a dark brown overall body color, an indistinct light colored nuchal band with a slightly darker posterior border. Additionally, this specimen possessed a light spot on the supralabials anterior to the eye, while directly under the eye was dark with a small light area behind the eye. Species identification was based on the taxonomic keys of both Solorzano (2004) and Köhler (2008). Only *Tantilla armillata* and *T. supracincta* are known from Coclé, Panama. This specimen was discriminated from *T. supracincta* based on the obvious differences in color pattern; *T. supracincta* has a red dorsum with yellow centered, black cross-bands (Savage 2002). The specimen was discriminated from *T. armillata* by the presence of the red venter, a complete nuchal band and by possessing only 150 ventral scales; *T. armillata* has a whitish venter, lacks a nuchal band and male specimens of this species have 155 to 174 ventral scales (Savage 2002; Köhler 2008). The specimen was collected, preserved, and has been deposited in the collection at La MICA Biological Station (accession number: TSP 2012-30) under permit number SE/A-22-12.

Although this new distribution record is not unexpected given what is known about the range of this species, our finding fills the distributional gap from northern Colombia to northwestern Panama. Parque Nacional G. D. Omar Torrijos Herrera has been well studied in terms of its herpetofauna (e.g. Crawford *et al.* 2010; Lips *et al.* 2006; Montgomery *et al.* 2011; Ray 2011a,b, 2012; Ray *et al.* 2012), but this finding underscores the importance of taxonomic surveys that will act as future baseline datasets for conservation management and species monitoring. Thus we recommend a through survey of the understudied leaf-litter snake fauna of Parque Nacional G. D. Omar Torrijos Herrera, as well as other cloud forest regions of Central America.

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